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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

21 April 1988

NOTE FOR: DDCI

FROM: Fritz W. Ermarth
C/NIC

SUBJECT: Attached Memo on Soviet Influence Operations

When I noticed that the DCI would be meeting with FBI Director Sessions, I felt it would be timely to put before him the attached memo about the mounting challenge of Soviet influence operations in the US. I've come away from my experience downtown feeling strongly that we have to do more on this, both for security and for positive intelligence. This memo may or may not be the right way to air the problem with Judge Webster. On that I solicit your instruction. I have shown this to Dave Gries and gotten his input, but have not gone to others. Should you think it appropriate to send to the Judge, I would want to copy this memo to NIO/FDIA, the CI Staff, and perhaps others.

Fritz W. Ermarth

Barb,

Copy to NIO/FDIA
NIO/USSR
ADDO/CI
[redacted]
} sent 4/22/88

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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC #01447-88
21 April 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Fritz W. Ermarth
Chairman

SUBJECT: Future Soviet Influence Operations in the United States

SUMMARY: The Soviet Union is highly likely to step up its covert political influence operations in the United States in the years ahead. On the face of it, effective monitoring of such operations by the US law enforcement and intelligence communities would be desirable. But policy, legal, and operational problems may stand in the way. This is a subject you may wish to discuss tentatively when you meet FBI Director Sessions on Monday 25 April.

* * *

Recent examples I am aware of are:

A long-standing Soviet program that uses KGB-affiliated officials in the Soviet and other Bloc embassies in Washington to feed perspectives about US-Soviet relations to the US Government via private Americans [redacted] 25X1 25X1

An effort by Anatoliy Dobrynin, former Soviet ambassador to Washington and now chief of the International Department of the Central Committee, to set up a private, high-level channel of communication with the White House via [redacted] 25X1

An effort by Radomir Bogdanov, a high official of Arbatov's Institute for the USA and Canada and a known KGB officer, to influence White House views on summit venue and timing through a private American with personal access to the President.

Elaborate communications between Soviet and American academics intended to shape recent arms control negotiations.

I personally do not know for certain of any currently active cases of Soviet-controlled American agents of influence, but would be surprised if there were none. The common denominator of these activities is a

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centralized effort on the Soviet side to control and exploit the contents of such interactions, an effort which is hardly perfect (and perhaps getting less so with the "looser" style of the current Soviet regime) but is facilitated by the nature of the system.

Soviet covert political influence operations are likely to increase in scale and importance, I believe, for a number of reasons:

The Gorbachev leadership is seeking to energize Soviet official and unofficial diplomacy across the board.

Managing relations with the United States remains Moscow's top foreign policy priority.

Soviet foreign policy is now dominated by figures (such as Dobrynin and Yakovlev) who are relatively sophisticated about the US and want to exploit the openness of our political arena.

Improved US-Soviet relations in the Gorbachev period will vastly increase the non-official contacts by which influence can be purveyed.

Political considerations -- in this case, sympathy with the perceived domestic and foreign policy aims of the new Soviet regime -- may motivate some Americans to collaborate covertly with the Soviets.

These factors make quite plausible the testimony of one Soviet foreign affairs academic, passed to me indirectly during my tenure on the NSC Staff. He alleged that Moscow had decided to both broaden and better coordinate political influence operations in the US. The International Department of the Central Committee would be the policy-planning "brains" of the campaign; the KGB would provide operational management; Soviet academics, scientists, businessmen, journalists, and artists would be the "field hands" in direct contact with Americans. In addition to Executive Branch figures, this Soviet campaign would be directed against the Hill, the business community, the media, and influentual academics in the US. An added note was that such shopworn techniques as sexual entanglements would be used to develop American agents of influence, not via entrapment for blackmail, but simply to make them feel positive about the USSR; the source touted this as a form of "new thinking."

We need to monitor and understand such Soviet activities for both CI/security and for positive intelligence reasons. The former are obvious. The latter are also important: Understanding of Soviet influence operations will tell us much about Soviet longer-range goals and perceptions of the US, and also give us opportunities to defeat or turn such operations and to counter-recruit. Intelligence about Soviet influence operations abroad, especially in Europe, can inform our understanding of Soviet activities in the US.

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Improving our ability to monitor Soviet influence operations to a degree commensurate with their expected expansion could prove difficult. The numbers and apparent innocence of the US-Soviet contacts involved will tax available monitoring resources. The difficulty of distinguishing between legal and illegal behavior, so long as outright espionage is not involved, will inhibit surveillance and interrogation of subjects, and possibly the exchange of data among intelligence and counter-intelligence entities. Political concerns about generating witch hunts may constrain monitoring activities.

These difficulties, arising at root from the open nature of our society, will make it impossible to achieve perfection in monitoring or countering what the Soviets seek to do. We may judge some forms of Soviet influence operations as non-threatening or legitimate, a form of "discreet unofficial diplomacy" of the sort that takes place normally in many aspects of our foreign relations.

But some effort to improve our monitoring of this phenomenon appears in order. Unless you direct otherwise, I plan to encourage NIO/FDIA to query the FBI, CIA's CI Staff and perhaps other Community components as to whether we are indeed facing a greater challenge and, if so, to stimulate thinking on what to do about it. The sympathy of FBI Director Sessions would, of course, be vital.

Fritz W. Ermarth

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NIC #01447-88
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SUBJECT: Future Soviet Influence Operations in the United States

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